

**GAME NOTES**

**We defended well during the final**

**Phase: Marjine**  
**DHAKA, OCT 23** /-/- Conceding last minute goals has been the bane of Indian hockey but recently appointed coach Speed Marjine says the team improvised its defensive tactics quite well in its triumph over Malaysia in the Asia Cup Final. India edged past Malaysia 2-1 to claim their first continental championship trophy in a decade. "I was a bit worried when the score was 2-1 and strange goals can happen in last four or five minutes. I am really happy how they (the India players) played, they changed the way we defend in the end and that helped us clinch the final," Marjine said after guiding the team to title triumph in his maiden assignment.

**Now at Kotla: Gatenamed after Sehwal**

**NEW DELHI, OCT 23** /-/- The Delhi and District Cricket Association (DDCA) has decided to name a gate of the Feroz Shah Kotla ground after former India opener Virender Sehwal. Gate number two of the Kotla will be named after Sehwal on October 21, a day before the opening T20 International between India and New Zealand. "The erstwhile management had recognised Mr. Virender Sehwal's many accomplishments promised to name Gate no. 2 as the Virender Sehwal gate and I am giving effect to that promise," said DDCA Administrator Justice (retired) Vikramjit Sen, in a statement. (PTI)

**Shinwari wrecks Sri Lanka to 103 in fifth ODI**

**SHARJAH, OCT 23** /-/- Left-arm pace bowler Usman Shinwari produced a devastating five-wicket spell to reduce Sri Lanka to 103 all out in 26.2 overs in the final day-night international against Pakistan in Sharjah on Monday. The 23-year-old finished with 5-34 as Sri Lanka, who won the toss and batted on an easy paced Sharjah stadium pitch, never recovered from early loss of losing four wickets in the first three overs. Only Thisara Perera (25), Lahiru Thirimanne (19), Seekkara Prasanna (16) and Dushmantha Chameera (11) reached double figures in an abysmal batting performance by Sri Lanka, their second lowest total in ODIs against Pakistan in 2002. (AFP)

**Bhullar aims high on Asian Tour order of Merit**

**SENTOSA (SINGAPORE), OCT 23** /-/- The youngest to win eight Asian Tour titles, Indian golfer Gaganjeet Bhullar is now aiming to make a run for the top spot in the regional Order of Merit. Following his title triumph in the Macao Open yesterday, Bhullar is now 12th place on the Order of Merit. With seven tour titles and a total prize purse of USD 6.85 million still on offer, he is eyeing the top position on the Order of Merit. "It has been my childhood dream to win the Order of Merit. I've seen my heroes Arjun (Atwal), Jyoti (Ranadhun) and Jeev (Mikita Singh) win the Order of Merit. I would love to do the same and the goal for the rest of the season is to play like how I'm playing and stay in the positive mood," said.

**Brazil vs England shifted to Kolkata**

**NEW DELHI, OCT 23** /-/- The FIFA Under-17 World Cup semi-final between Brazil and England was today shifted from Guwahati to Kolkata due to poor pitch conditions in the North Eastern city, a development which will cause inconvenience to the two teams. The match, which was to be played at the Indira Gandhi stadium at the Assam capital, will be held as scheduled on October 25 but at the Salt Lake Stadium in Kolkata. "Following a thorough assessment of the pitch conditions at Guwahati's Indira Gandhi Athletic Stadium, which has been affected by severe rainfall over the past few days, FIFA has decided to move the venue of the semi-final between England and Brazil to Kolkata's Vivekananda Yuba Bharati Krirangan, where the match will kick off at 17:00hrs," the FIFA said in a statement. The change of venue will cause some inconvenience to the English and Brazilian teams as they had



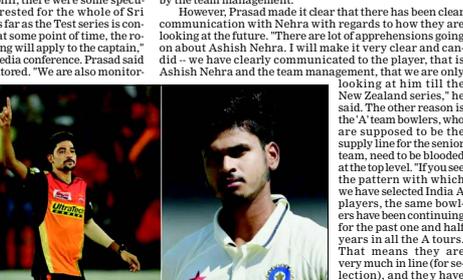
already landed in Guwahati. The two teams were also scheduled to have training sessions in Guwahati this evening. The pitch at the Indira Gandhi Athletic Stadium was severely affected during the quarter-final match between Ghana and Mali on Saturday which was played under incessant rain. The Assam capital has been experiencing rain for the last four days, though it rained a bit today. Rain stopped after light showers in the morning but the ground has been significantly damaged. Ghana coach Samuel Fabian has said that the match should have been postponed and played on another date after his side lost to Mali 1-2. "Despite the great efforts by all involved parties, including the authorities of Guwahati, to preserve the pitch, FIFA has taken this decision following consultations with both teams in order to safeguard the players' health and to ensure the best playing conditions," the FIFA added. The second semi-final on October 25, between Mali and Spain, will still kick off as planned at 20:00hrs at the SPAT Stadium in New Mumbai. Fans

with a valid ticket for the semi-final originally planned to take place in Guwahati will be entitled for a refund. All purchasable tickets for the rescheduled game in Kolkata will be priced at Rs 100 and made available on a first-come-first-served basis. The original Guwahati ticket-holders would be required to carry online proof of purchase to the dedicated ticket counter for Guwahati customers, should they travel to Kolkata. These tickets have also been priced at Rs 100. FIFA and the Local Organising Committee said it regretted that the match had to be shifted out of Guwahati but the LOC regret that unforeseen circumstances have led to this decision, which will deprive football fans in Guwahati of this semi-final encounter. Both FIFA and the LOC would like to sincerely thank the city of Guwahati and the state government of Assam for their excellent cooperation throughout the competition. (PTI)

**Rookies Siraj, Iyer in T20 squad; no rest for Kohli yet**

**MUMBAI, OCT 23** /-/- Skipper Virat Kohli got no immediate break, while rookie pacer Mohammed Siraj and prolific batsman Shreyas Iyer made their way into the strong Indian T20 squad for the three-match series against New Zealand, starting November 1. Despite speculation, Kohli was not rested from the New Zealand series and was also picked for the first two Tests against Sri Lanka, starting November 16. The matches against the islanders are to be held in Kolkata and Nagpur. However, chairman of selectors MSK Prasad indicated that a "rotation policy will be applicable" for the captain as well. "It is expected that Kohli will be rested for the final Test and the limited-overs series against Sri Lanka, which is slated in December as he would be required fresh and re-energised before the tough tour of South Africa. "With regards to Virat Kohli, there were some speculations that he is going to be rested for the whole of Sri Lanka series, it is not right. As far as the Test series is concerned, he is going to play and at some point of time, the rotation policy that we are following will apply to the captain," Prasad made it clear during a media conference. Prasad said Siraj's workload is being monitored. "We are also monitoring his workload. He has been playing consistently right from IPL till today, we need to give him a break which we will consider after the Test series," he added. There are no surprises in the Test squad with Abhinav Mukund making way for a fit-agony first-choice opener Murali Vijay. Vijay did not take part in the last Test series against Sri Lanka as he had a hand injury and some other fitness related issues. Predictably, Ravichandran Ashwin made a comeback in the longer version with Kuldeep Yadav being the third specialist spinner in the 16-member squad. Senior speedsters Umesh Yadav, Mohammed Shami and Ishant Sharma are back in the mix for the five-day format along with Test specialists Cheteshwar Pujara and Wridhiman Saha. In the T20 squad, the 23-year-old Siraj, who first came into prominence for Sunrisers Hyderabad, has been rewarded for his impressive performances for India A during a recent tour of South Africa and matches against New Zealand. The 22-year-old Iyer has been a consistent performer for his home state Mumbai and India A during the past one year. He scored a double hundred earlier this year in a warm-up game against Australia along with a match-winning hundred against South Africa A in the summit clash of an away tri-series. His call-up is on expected lines as he has had some good knocks for the Delhi Daredevils in the 2016 edition of the Indian Premier League. "Shreyas

Iyer has been prolific in all forms of the game, be it Tests, ODIs or T20s or IPL - name anything, he is performing. If we pick a player, we will give him an extended run and will continue with him for some point and nurture him and see that he goes on to become successful." With Siraj, he is doing well and has been duly rewarded," said Prasad. Ashish Nehra, who will retire after the first T20 game against New Zealand on November 1, has been picked for only that game scheduled in his home ground of Delhi. Prasad made it clear that the 38-year-old's inclusion in the playing XI will be the team management's decision. "Whether he (Nehra) is going to play or not, is clearly the decision of the team management. There are no assurances from our side (selectors), whether he is going to play or not. It will purely be decided by the team management."



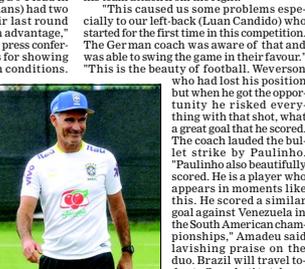
Africa (A tour) and also at home against New Zealand." Prasad said that Nehra has been told about selectors' logic.

**Team for T20I series against New Zealand: Virat Kohli (Captain), KL Rahul, Shikhar Dhawan, Rohit Sharma (Vice-Captain), KL Rahul, Manish Pandey, Shreyas Iyer, Dinesh Karthik, MS Dhoni (WK), Hardik Pandya, Akar Patel, Yuzvendra Chahal, Kuldeep Yadav, Bhuvaneshwar Kumar, Jasprit Bumrah, Ashish Nehra, Mohammed Siraj.**  
**Team for first two Test matches of the 3-match series against Sri Lanka: Virat Kohli (Captain), KL Rahul, Murali Vijay, Shikhar Dhawan, Cheteshwar Pujara, Ajinkya Rahane (Vice-Captain), Rohit Sharma, Wridhiman Saha, R Ashwin, Ravindra Jadeja, Kuldeep Yadav, Hardik Pandya, Mohammed Shami, Umesh Yadav, Bhuvaneshwar Kumar, Ishant Sharma, (PTI)**

**Brazil coach lauds team for mental fortitude**

**KOLKATA, OCT 23** /-/- "The win over Germany was a difficult one, admitted Brazil coach Carlos Amadeu, who said his side had to slog it out both physically and mentally in the 2-1 triumph which took the South Americans into the semifinals of the FIFA Under-17 World Cup. Brazil edged past Germany here last night after conceding a 1-0 lead in the first half. "They (the Germans) had two days' rest having played their last round match before us. It could be an advantage," Amadeu said in the post-match press conference. Amadeu hailed his boys for showing character in the face of tough conditions. "The hot and humid weather definitely play a role affecting both the teams. But you have to think that these players were playing the game of their lives. Playing in front of 66,000-plus, they were all tired," he said. "I'm really happy with my boys. They not only put up a great physical challenge but their mental toughness was commendable," he said. Amadeu credited a second-half change of tactics for the victory. Amadeu said the Brazilians managed to confuse the Germans with their tactical shift. Germany led 1-0 till the 70th minute before substitute Weverson, who replaced a lackluster Luan Candido, and versatile playmaker Paulinho struck in a brilliant display to set up a semi date with England. Amadeu discussed the change in strategy during the break and brought in Weverson in place of Candido, besides switching the players' positions. "Our midfielders went to the wings while fullbacks and rightbacks went in a more central role. As a result, our forwards could infiltrate their defence more. This mixing with the positions and the style of play confused them," Amadeu said at the post-match news conference. "We also tackled their style to shoot directly from their defence by marking them well and blocked them. We managed to play better in the second half," he said of Brazil, in line for a fourth title. It was the Germans who stymied the

Brazilians' midfield early on and did not give any chance to the likes of Paulinho and Luan. Brazil conceded a penalty when Candido lost the ball possession. "The German coach had a very good strategy. He blocked our midfielders and neutralised our most important offensive system. He made his team attack from the right. "This caused us some problems especially to our left-back (Luan Candido) who started for the first time in this competition. The German coach was aware of that and was able to wing the game in their favour. "This is the beauty of football. Weverson who had lost his position but when he got the opportunity he risked everything with that shot, what a great goal that he scored. The coach lauded the bullet strike by Paulinho. "Paulinho also beautifully scored. He is a player who appears in moments like this. He scored a similar goal against Venezuela in the South American championships." Amadeu said lavishing praise on the duo. Brazil will travel today to Guwahati to take on England in the semifinal on October 25. Today we made a very difficult victory. It was very difficult to win against Germany. Today is the day to enjoy. This is the time to enjoy the moment, talk to our families, celebrate with our technical staff. Tomorrow we will start to think about England. "It's how we do everything - we dance when we win and also when we lose... We cannot be euphoric or too sad when we lose." Brazil also found themselves at home at the city's Salt Lake Stadium where a majority of the 66,000 fans turned up to support the South Americans. "10 out of 10. If permitted, I will give them more than 10. We are looking forward to come back here again on Saturday (to play the final on October 28)," Amadeu said. "Congratulations to you for the organisation, for the brilliant stadium you have here... All the facilities, the changing room, the pitch everything was brilliant. It was huge for us. It was special to play here. (PTI)



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**Absolute reliance on technology can kill football: Busacca**

**KOLKATA, OCT 23** /-/- At a time when the world football is divided over the use of controversial video technology for the 2018 World Cup, FIFA's Head of Refereeing Massimo Busacca on Monday said relying fully on technology can "kill" the game. "Technology like microphone, camera cannot substitute your skills. Technology can only be a help for us but cannot be a substitute to human decisions. The day we think that of referees will substitute human decisions, we kill football. "We will referee, we will everything." Busacca told reporters on the sidelines at the SA East Eastern Centre. The FIFA president Gianni Infantino is keen on bringing video assistant referees (VAR) in Russia 2018 to rectify game-changing mistakes. But following a series of dubious decisions at the Confederations Cup in June this year, critics feel it's not fool proof and argue that Infantino is rushing into technology prematurely. The 46-year-old however did not reject VAR outright and without specifying anything he said technology could be a big help. "We're at the beginning of the trials in 75 games. We're looking in Italy, Germany and other member associations. I have to be honest. There are some things very difficult for the referees to see. And there could be situations at the World Cup

that can destroy a game and the tournament. On the other hand, we have to continue to teach referees to develop their standards on the pitch," said Busacca. "We still think technology can play a big role in eliminating a big scandal in a game and I am really positive about it. We still remember a scandal or a terrible decision happened long ago," he said without specifying the infamous football scandal - "hand of God." Stressing on the need for the referees to train and improve their physical as well as mental skill while officiating a match, Busacca said, "Referees have to be fit. The competition is very fast these days, even the hot and humidity factors

play a role. A referee has to be always ready for every situation." The Swiss said it was important to anticipate a game and run, so that they would not end up being like the fictional character of Forrest Gump. "It's about teaching the referees how to prepare in a tactical way and to be there at the right place at the right moment. It's about understanding the teams, their approach and what could happen in a top game. Think where the ball is going and the run and not like Forrest Gump! "Some has the natural ability, they wake up and they know it, while others need some training sessions to get themselves prepared. So the training is needed," he said.



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